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ADDRESS OF THE RETIRING VICE-PRESIDENT OF SECTION F OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

BEFORE proceeding to the special subject of this evening's address, which will be upon the research work of the Tortugas Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, your retiring vice-president begs permission briefly to plead the cause of the Zoological Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Our grandfathers founded this association and during our fathers' day, in that

tense period wherein the foundations of established beliefs seemed crumbling into chaos before the onslaught of Darwinism, the Zoological Section of the association was a vital force in bringing order out of the confusion of doubt and fear that beset the America of the seventies.

Then, in after years, there came the special societies, zoologists, anatomists, physiologists, ornithologists, entomologists and psychologists of America; and our Section F, having lost its appeal to the investigator as a clearing house for his ideas, has sadly languished.

However, let us not forget that the British Association which two generations ago was active in forming intelligent opinion in England, once also languished from a similar cause.

Then to our British cousins there came the light of a great idea. The field of their association expanded to embrace the whole imperial realm. Great meetings were held in Canada, South Africa and Australia, and the colonies became intellectually one with the mother country in a sense never known before.

The British Association is no longer a mere gathering of scientists, it is a mighty power in preserving that world-wide sympathy with ideals of democracy and fair play upon which the very existence of Britain's vast empire must depend. For England's strength is neither in acres nor in gold, but in the hearts of her sons who toil at many a stubborn task in many a distant land.

As servants of civilization, let the members of our own association meet the millions of America in a similar spirit.

At these meetings, let us speak with rather than to our countrymen.

Too often we may have looked upon the public as something colossal, crude and struggling, something far and apart from

our cloistered world within the college walls.

Let us come among our fellows not as doctors gowned and coped, but as the simple men and women that we are, seeking advice and aid more often than we can impart knowledge or develop wisdom. Realizing as we do that could we but exchange the known for the unknown, the little that science has achieved would appear contemptible. From the frontiers of our culture we gaze into the vast unknown, but it is but little that we can see.

Our science is not alone the concern of specialists but of every man and woman of our land and with the advent of modern medicine, antiseptic surgery, and a knowledge of the law of heredity, great human problems have arisen.

We now stand as trustees guarding things of vast import for good or evil. The very word eugenics conjures up problems for the wisdom of humanity to solve. These problems of science have shaped themselves from out the mists of doubt and lie as awful things upon our path, yet the higher the precipices the safer the harbor they enclose, and we await the wisdom of the wisest to guide us.

These are things too deep for the mere scientist, they are for each and every one of us, and the investigator is but one with the vast public in giving heed to their solution.

Yet in a deeper, more far-reaching sense, our association has a mission humanity-wide in its embrace, and as the duel has ceased to be respectable among individuals, so let war come to be regarded among the nations. It is with no boasting of virtue that we men of science of America can take this stand. We must speak as sinners pleading with sinners. Let us not forget that militarism has been in our own land as well as elsewhere. Let us remember that

every generation of Americans has drawn the sword, and that the most prolonged and devastating conflict of the nineteenth century was waged on our own soil over a question which Great Britain solved through a simple act of Parliament.

The light of civilization has glorified the summit of our ideal but the vast mountain below has forever remained dark in the barbarism of the savage. Our new-born love of all humanity is superimposed upon ages of distrust, prejudice and hatred born of ignorance, but let us recognize that the spark of kindness that seems so small to-day is ours at least to foster until true to its destiny it shines as a blessing to all future generations of our earth.

To effect these things what better body can there be than the men of science of the nations of the earth acting in cooperation with that vast multitude of our fellows from whom we have received the blessed opportunity to labor and to serve.

The problems of our fathers' day were trivial compared with these. Let us therefore be true to the old ideals of our American Association, and let it forever stand for *association* in terms of mutual helpfulness between our public and our men of science.<sup>1</sup>

ALFRED G. MAYER

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#### AID TO ASTRONOMICAL RESEARCH

THE experience of the Rumford, Elizabeth Thompson and certain other research funds shows that great returns may be obtained from relatively small grants to suitable persons. Owing to the excellent organizations resulting from the large sums given to astrophysics in this country, astronomers are well qualified to secure such results. Accordingly, the follow-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mayer devoted the remainder of the evening to an account of the research work of the Tortugas Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington illustrated by colored lantern slides.